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ABSTRACT

This report describes the results of the Massachusetts study of foreign languages, part of the second phase of the Massachusetts Educational Assessment Program. The assessment was conducted using a random sample of students from all over the state during one year of testing. The report is presented in five sections: (1) background of the study; (2) the measurements and the samples of students; (3) summary of findings; (4) comparison between FLES and non-FLES programs, including a discussion of student responses, decisions to study foreign language, and teacher responses; and (5) implications of the study. Analyses of the data have been made to address questions dealing with the following: (1) the relationship between length and intensity of the study of foreign languages and student achievement and interest; (2) patterns of relationships between classroom practices and student achievement and interest; (3) the possibility of differences between classroom and organizational practices in school systems that begin foreign language study early and systems that do not; and (4) patterns existing in the reasons students give for their decision to study foreign language and for their choice of language. (AMH)

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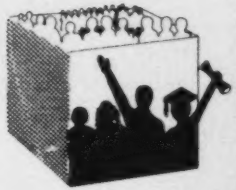
FOREIGN LANGUAGE 1975-1976

MASSACHUSETTS EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT PROGRAM



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FOREWORD

In 1973, the Massachusetts Board of Education initiated the Statewide Educational Assessment Program to provide Massachusetts citizens with useful information about the quality of education in the Commonwealth. As a result of the first phase of the program, teachers, administrators, parents, students, public officials and employers were provided with findings which indicated patterns of performance in reading, mathematics, and occupational knowledge as well as students' occupational attitudes and decision-making skills.

This report describes the results of the Statewide Study of Foreign Languages. Information from this and other parts of the second phase of the Massachusetts Educational Assessment Program will contribute toward enhancing learning opportunities for Massachusetts students.

The program reflects the goals and objectives which the Commonwealth's public considers relevant to Massachusetts education. I am pleased to present this year's assessment findings for review by all interested citizens.

Mary Ann Hardenbergh
Chairperson
Massachusetts Board of Education

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The success of the Statewide Study of Foreign Languages can be credited to the involvement and assistance of educators, citizens and students throughout the Commonwealth. Implementation of the program could not have been accomplished without the effort and support received from many concerned and committed people in the State.

The cooperation of the following groups and individuals is greatly appreciated:

- The Statewide Assessment Advisory Committee members who assisted in determining the study's design and in reviewing the report's content;
- The Massachusetts Teachers Association representatives who provided recommendations concerning the program's structure and implementation;
- The Executive Committees of the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, the Massachusetts Association of Secondary School Principals, the Massachusetts Association of Elementary School Principals and the Massachusetts Association of School Committees for their backing of this effort;
- The many teachers, principals, superintendents and department heads or coordinators who facilitated the administration of the tests and questionnaires.

We owe special thanks however to the Massachusetts Foreign Language Association for its continued collaboration and to the following association members for their extensive assistance.

- Ms. Stella Boy, Ms. Elaine Hardie, Mr. John P. Nionakis, Mr. Richard M. Penta, and Dr. James Powers in contributing to the design of the study.
- Ms. Stella Boy, Mr. John P. Nionakis, and Mr. Richard M. Penta for arduous review and revision of inventory and questionnaire instruments.
- Mr. John P. Nionakis for unselfishly coordinating and contributing to the scoring of the tests by language specialists.

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I. BACKGROUND

HISTORY

In 1971, the Massachusetts Board of Education issued "The Results Approach to Education and Educational Imperatives," outlining fourteen priorities for Department of Education attention. The first three priorities of the document are: Define the educational results expected (goals); Measure the educational results achieved (design for assessment); Establish result-oriented educational standards tied to goals.

In 1972, in response to the first priority, and through an effort involving citizens throughout the Commonwealth, the Board of Education published "Educational Goals for Massachusetts." This document described the ten broad goals to which the educational systems of the Commonwealth should aspire.

In July 1973, in response to the second priority, the Board of Education approved the development of the statewide educational assessment program. Six regional assessment advisory committees, composed of teachers, educational administrators, employers, public officials, parents and students, were established to design the educational assessment program. Since one of the major goals of the assessment program is to provide information about the quality of education on a statewide basis, the committees decided that a sample of students could be used to measure patterns of achievement.

During 1974-75, the Massachusetts Department of Education implemented the first phase of the statewide assessment program. The first phase addressed three of the state's ten educational goals--basic communication skills, effective uses of knowledge, and occupational

competence. Performance information from samples of students throughout the Commonwealth was collected in reading, mathematics and decision-making for nine and seventeen year olds, and occupational knowledge and occupational attitudes for seventeen year olds only. In addition, a sample of citizens throughout the state were surveyed to determine their attitudes toward education and their evaluation of the Massachusetts educational goals.

After the results of the first phase of the program were released in the spring of 1975, the Statewide Assessment Advisory Committee was asked to recommend the areas to be examined in Phase II of the program. On the basis of the Committee's suggestions to the State Board of Education, the second stage of the assessment effort deals with six of the ten state educational goals--basic communication skills, effective uses of knowledge, individual values and attitudes, respect for the community of man, citizenship in a democratic society, and understanding of the environment.

In order to measure these goals, a sample of 8,000 nine and seventeen year old students throughout the state were assessed in Writing, Citizenship and Social Studies. A separate study was also made of Foreign Language performance among secondary school students with different lengths and intensities of exposure to instruction in French or Spanish. These studies have been conducted by Educational Research Corporation under contract with the Bureau of Research and Assessment.

The statewide educational assessment program is intended to provide information for statewide decision-making as well as for local utilization. Although individual schools and school districts are not identified, several activities have been conducted during

the second year of the program to assist school systems in using the assessment findings. The Department of Education has made available to school systems, teams comprised of personnel from the Bureau of Research and Assessment, retired school superintendents, teachers, and graduate students. These teams have helped communities analyze and interpret the findings of the first phase of the program and apply them to their local situation where appropriate. At the same time, the Department of Education has conducted regional workshops for those interested in examining programmatic responses to the first phase findings. These workshops have provided teachers, counselors, and educational administrators the opportunity to identify different types of curricular approaches that might be useful in improving student skills.

PURPOSE

The overall purpose of the assessment program is to gather information that will indicate how well the Commonwealth's educational system is meeting its goals. It is not the purpose of the assessment to determine how well individual students, schools, or school districts perform. Accordingly, the assessment was conducted on a random sample of students from all over the state. In any one school, and in many districts, a maximum of twenty students was tested in any one subject. The data in these reports come from only one year of testing and can be useful as base-line information, but the findings cannot be analyzed to show trends in the school systems of the Commonwealth. In addition, the reader should be aware that factors other than school programs influence performance. Knowledge, skills and attitudes are learned from parents, peers, and the media as well as from teachers.

Specifically, the assessment program serves four goals: first, to provide the general citizenry, students, parents, legislators, and educators with more accurate and useful information about the quality of education in Massachusetts; second, to provide state-level decision-makers with detailed information necessary to make better informed policy decisions and recommendations about state-wide educational activities; third, to provide citizens, school committees and school administrators with information on patterns of performance as an aid in analyzing local educational conditions and in setting local objectives; fourth, to make available to school systems assessment procedures for use in developing and implementing local assessment programs.

This Highlights Report is one of three summarizing the results of the second phase of the educational assessment.

II. FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Across the Commonwealth students begin the study of foreign languages at different times: some in the elementary grades, others in junior high or middle schools, and still others in high schools. This component of the second phase of the assessment program examines the relationships among the grade in which students begin the study of foreign language, the intensity of that study and the achievement and interest in foreign languages exhibited by students in secondary school. The purpose of this analysis is to provide educators and administrators with information that will help them to better understand some of the factors influencing intended results of foreign language instruction.

There are a number of hypotheses about beginning as early as possible the study of foreign language. One of the commonly held beliefs is that early study of foreign language should have a positive effect upon student skills in listening, speaking, writing and reading in foreign languages. Another hypothesis is that early introduction to foreign languages should influence student interest in the use and further study of languages. This project is designed to provide evidence that may help to test these hypotheses.

The details of this project were planned in close cooperation with officers of the Massachusetts Foreign Language Association (MFLA). Members of the MFLA contributed extensively to determining the factors that should be measured and the relationships to be studied in this analysis. They also provided significant assistance in developing the questionnaires which were distributed to students and teachers involved in foreign language programs.

THE MEASUREMENTS

One of the decisions made with representatives of the MFLA was that students enrolled in French III and Spanish III in high school should be the subjects of the study. In order to examine these students' listening, reading, writing and speaking skills, an established standardized test which includes measurements of oral skills was used. Following a review of existing instruments, the Cooperative Foreign Language Tests of the Modern Language Association were selected. These include measurements of listening, reading and writing, as well as speaking. Form LA was selected as most appropriate for those who had completed Level II of the language and would be midway in Level III.

With the continued assistance of officers of the MFLA a student interest inventory was developed. This inventory was intended to solicit data about student experiences in the study of foreign languages at various grade levels as well as to provide data about present interests and attitudes regarding varied uses of foreign languages. The inventory was designed also to solicit information about factors in the students' backgrounds which might influence achievement and interest in foreign languages such as whether they lived in another country for some time or whether a language other than English was spoken in the home. With such data, differences in backgrounds of the students could be accounted for in the analysis.

THE SAMPLE OF STUDENTS

Using a number of sources, every effort was made to identify Massachusetts school systems in which foreign language study is begun early. An informal survey conducted previously by the Massachusetts Department of Education had identified twelve school

systems providing foreign language programs in elementary schools (often referred to as FLES). An additional survey, conducted jointly by the Bureau of Research and Assessment and the MFLA, identified twelve more school systems in which foreign language instruction is provided prior to the seventh grade. These twenty-four systems were surveyed further to find out how many students in their third level French and Spanish classes had begun the study of a language prior to grade seven. From these results, twelve school systems were selected as having sufficient numbers of FLES students in the aggregate to make possible tests of statistical significance. Further, each system had the language laboratory facilities necessary for administering the speaking and listening components of the tests.

Each of the twelve school systems was matched with another school system in which foreign language study began no earlier than grade seven. These matchings were based upon the kind of community (city, industrial suburb or residential suburb) and upon the per capita equalized property valuation levels or income levels of the communities. These matchings were done to at least partially control for the influence of socio-economic status of the students' community which frequently affects results of testing.

These twenty-four school systems, twelve FLES and twelve matched control systems, were invited to participate in the study, and all but two agreed to cooperate, even with the extensive testing involved. Each of the participating schools was provided with a quota of students to be selected at random from the Level III classes in order that the total number of students sampled would be matched as closely as possible by the socio-economic characteristics of the communities.

The actual selection of the random samples of students in each school was done by Educational Research Corporation (ERC) from rosters of students enrolled in Level III classes. ERC identified the sample of students selected from all Level III classes and identified alternates for use in the event of absences. Each selected student and alternate was assigned a unique number for use on all response forms so as to preserve anonymity of the students tested. All rosters and identification numbers were returned to the schools.

The teachers in the schools administered the tests following the publisher's instructions so as to have as common test conditions as possible. The student inventory was also administered by the schools, but that instrument was self-explanatory and required no special instructions.

The tests contained four sections, of which two, listening and reading, were machine scorable from optical scanning sheets used by the students for their responses. These two sections were scored by machine, but the other two sections, speaking and writing, were scored differently. The speaking responses were recorded on tape, and these were scored by several volunteers from the MFLA, primarily department heads from schools in the Boston area and members of the faculty at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Part of the writing responses required judgments of professionals, and those were scored by the MFLA volunteers as well. The remainder of the writing responses had answer keys requiring no judgments, so those were scored by ERC.

Test scores were combined with student responses to the interest inventory enabling several analyses of scores and responses in the inventory.

Table 1 shows for the French and Spanish samples how many students began the study of foreign languages at each grade level.

TABLE 1

DISTRIBUTION BY GRADE LEVELS IN WHICH FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDY BEGAN

Grade	French III	Spanish III
1	16	1
2	5	1
3	72	1
4	122	8
5	34	88
6	38	17
7	180	87
8	35	11
9	47	25
TOTAL	549	239

III. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Various analyses have been made of the data collected in order to address the questions listed below.

1. Is there evidence of relationships between length and intensity of the study of foreign languages and student achievement and interest in foreign languages?
2. Are there patterns of relationships between classroom practices employed at different grade levels and student achievement and interest in foreign languages?
3. Are there discernible differences between classroom and organizational practices that exist in school systems that begin language study early (as, FLES) and school systems that do not?
4. What patterns exist in the reasons students give for their decision to study foreign languages and in the language they select?

The first two questions are best answered by means of an experimental design in which students are randomly assigned to groups in which the length, intensity and practices are varied systematically. Such an experiment would enable us to infer directly whether these appear to make a difference in outcomes, because any other influences would have been "equaled out" by the random assignments. However, in the real world such an experiment is just not possible--in practice students are not given or denied special treatment by random procedures. Differential treatment actually varies according to student needs, parental interests, school system resources, and so on.

As a proxy for the ideal experimental design that controls for influences other than those being studied, researchers of education collect data about possible influences in order to use statistical analysis procedures that try to correct for the lack of random assignments. These procedures try to "equal out" influences other than those being studied, by correcting for whatever influence they appear to have.

A number of external influences could affect student achievement and interest in foreign languages. Many of these could be home influences, as, parental attitudes and guidance, or they could be related to experiences the students have had, as, travel to another country or exposure to foreign languages at home or in a community. The possible influences are virtually infinite, and many are difficult to measure accurately. Certain data were collected as Background Variables that may represent important external influences on language interest and achievement. These Background Variables are listed in Table 2.

TABLE 2

BACKGROUND VARIABLES

1. Kind of Community
2. Mother's Education
3. Father's Education
4. Occupation of Head of Household
5. Language Other than English in Home
6. Number of U.S. Cities Lived in
7. Lived Outside U.S.
8. Number of Different School Systems Attended
9. Attended School Outside the U.S.

LENGTH AND INTENSITY OF STUDY

There was a total of 549 students in French III for whom data were available for analysis, and there were 239 students in Spanish III. These two groups were analyzed separately to identify, for each group, relationships among test scores, indicators of interest in foreign languages, and exposure to foreign language instruction. Table 3 lists the variables used to measure length and intensity of foreign language study. It also provides the factors considered as important outcomes.

The analysis procedure used for this study measured the relationship of each Study Variable with each Outcome after "equalizing" the Background Variables. Consider, for example, the relationship between the Study Variable, grade started foreign language study, and the Outcome, listening achievement. By means of a "correlation coefficient" we can test whether or not there is a significant relationship between grade started and listening, but both of these may be related to, say, the father's education. We use, therefore, a statistical technique to correct for the relationships with father's education in order to assess the real relationship between grade started and listening quite apart from influences of father's education. This procedure was used to correct for all the Background Variables in looking at the relationship of grade started with listening, and in fact with all other analyses of relationships.

TABLE 3

LISTING OF STUDY VARIABLES ANALYZED FOR RELATIONSHIPS WITH OUTCOMES IN ACHIEVEMENT AND INTERESTS

Study Variables

1. Grade Started Foreign Language Study
2. Number of Years of Foreign Language Study Before Grade 9
3. Number of Hours of Same Foreign Language Studied Before Grade 9
4. Number of Different Foreign Languages Studied Before Grade 9
5. Number of Hours of All Foreign Languages Studied Before Grade 9

Achievement Outcomes

1. Listening
2. Speaking
3. Reading
4. Writing

Interest Outcomes

1. Plan to Continue Study of Same Foreign Language
2. Relevance of Foreign Language to Future Plans
3. Foreign Language Activities Outside Class Work
4. Interest in Acquiring Some Foreign Language Skills
5. Interest in Career Requiring Foreign Language
6. Consider it Important for Americans to Learn Foreign Language
7. Membership in Foreign Language Clubs

ACHIEVEMENT VARIABLES

Table 4 summarizes the statistically significant relationships between the Study Variables and each of the Outcomes for French achievement. The first two rows relate to length of study. The first row, "Grade Started Foreign Language (FL) Study," shows that the earlier the student begins the study of French the better his or her achievement in Listening, Reading, and Writing in this foreign language. The second row, "Number of Years of FL Before Grade 9," another measure of length of study, is also positively related to student achievement in Listening, Reading, and Writing.

The third row stands for the number of hours devoted to the study of French prior to grade nine or, in different terms, for the intensity of study. This measure is derived from the number of classes per week and the number of minutes of class time reported by the student. It too shows a positive association with student proficiency in Listening, Reading, and Writing.

The number of different foreign languages studied by students before grade nine is represented in the fourth row. From the table we can see that this measure influences achievement not only in Listening, Reading and Writing, but also in Speaking.

The last study variable, the total number of hours of all foreign languages studied prior to grade nine, includes the additional hours of study of a different foreign language for those who had studied more than one. However, since so few students studied more than one foreign language, this measure is essentially the same as the other measure of intensity (the number of hours of same foreign language studied before grade nine). As can be expected, the total number of hours of study of all languages shows the same patterns of significant relationships.

TABLE 4

TABULATION OF SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS ACHIEVEMENT VS. STUDY VARIABLES

FRENCH	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
Grade Started Foreign Language Study	+		+	+
Number of Years of Foreign Language Study Before Grade 9	+		+	+
Number of Hours of Same Foreign Language Before Grade 9	+		+	+
Number of Different Foreign Languages Studied Before Grade 9	+	+	+	+
Number of Hours of All Foreign Languages Before Grade 9	+		+	+

It is interesting to see that French Speaking scores show a significant relationship only with the number of different foreign languages studied before grade nine. This suggests that exposure to several languages provides better experience in developing good accent and speaking habits than does the study of just one language, and that vocabulary can be reinforced by another language.

Table 5 shows the statistically significant relationships between the Study Variables and each of the Outcomes for Spanish achievement.

The relationships of length and intensity of study with Spanish achievement is almost the complete opposite of those identified with French--a positive relationship exists with Speaking, and only the number of different languages studied before grade nine is related to Reading and Writing proficiency. No relationship is apparent with Listening.

The striking difference between French and Spanish relationships raises several questions of possible causes. Is there any evidence that the students of French differ from the students of Spanish? The Spanish students tend to reside in residential communities with higher average incomes than do the French students, but the analysis procedure used compensated for whatever effect that difference may have. Otherwise the student groups were quite comparable in backgrounds and interests.

Is there any evidence that the classroom experiences differ for the two groups of students, particularly prior to grade nine? Table 6 provides a comparison of student reports of how frequently various activities occured in their elementary school classes, showing what percent of the students responded "Very Often" as opposed to "Sometimes," "Rarely," or "Never."

TABLE 5

TABULATION OF SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS
ACHIEVEMENT VS. STUDY VARIABLES

SPANISH	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
Grade Started Foreign Language Study		+		
Number of Years of Foreign Language Study Before Grade 9		+		
Number of Hours of Same Foreign Language Before Grade 9		+		
Number of Different Foreign Languages Studied Before Grade 9		+	+	+
Number of Hours of All Foreign Languages Before Grade 9		+		

TABLE 6

COMPARISON OF STUDENT RESPONSES TO
HOW OFTEN CERTAIN LEARNING ACTIVITIES WERE USED IN
ELEMENTARY FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSES

	Expressed in Percent Responding "Very Often"	
	Spanish	French
Working from a Textbook	9	39
Workbook Exercises	2	29
Work on Grammar Exercises	9	31
Verb Conjugation Drills	6	28
Translating Sentences into English	7	22
Translating Sentences into the Foreign Language	5	18

The comparisons in Table 6 show that the Spanish students had considerably less exposure to activities that would contribute to the traditional skills of reading and writing. Thus, the lack of association of length and intensity with Reading and Writing scores seems to be explained by the lack of emphasis in elementary school Spanish study on activities that would contribute to reading and writing skill development. Further, the emphasis on these activities in French study in elementary schools possibly helps to explain why length and intensity are related to French Reading and Writing scores.

Finally, are there differences between the languages themselves that may help to explain the different findings? Spanish is more phonetic and involves fewer sounds which are unfamiliar to those who speak English. Thus, lengthy exposure is perhaps not as essential to the development of listening skills in Spanish, but more exposure and practice should improve speaking skills as better accents develop with practice. By contrast, extended practice with French should, as the findings show, produce an association with listening skills, as they do. Further, however, speaking skills should improve with practice, too, but the test scores do not show length and intensity to be related to French Speaking scores. Perhaps once again it is a question of emphasis. Secondary school teachers report that they emphasize listening and speaking skills in that order, but the student reports of how often they practice speaking show an interesting difference. Table 7 shows the percent of FLES students who responded that they practiced speaking "Very Often" at different school levels.

TABLE 7

FLES STUDENTS RESPONDING THAT THEIR CLASSES PRACTICED SPEAKING "VERY OFTEN" BY SCHOOL LEVEL AND LANGUAGE

	Expressed in Percents	
	Spanish	French
Elementary	71	69
Junior High (Grades 7 and 8)	89	71
High School	73	58

The data in Table 7 show that French study in high schools, junior and senior, places less emphasis upon the practice of speaking than does Spanish study. This suggests that the lack of reinforcement of speaking practice in junior and senior high schools reduces any advantages students may have obtained from their study in elementary school. This could be a consequence of another difference between the languages. In the study of French there is a tradition of using the language to read the rich literature in French. By contrast, Spanish does not have the same tradition to such an extent, and its study is most likely motivated by a general interest in communicating with the native speakers of Spanish in Massachusetts who outnumber the native speakers of French. If this difference is a relevant one, student reactions to different emphases should show that French speaking is less related to exposure than is Spanish speaking. The data support this finding.

Further, the student data show that in grades seven and eight there is a difference in the extent to which teachers use the foreign language for conversing with the students. Among FLES students 60 percent of those studying Spanish reported that the teacher spoke in Spanish more than half the time, but only 37 percent of those studying French reported comparable practice by their teachers.

INTEREST VARIABLES

Tables 8 and 9 summarize the statistically significant relationships between the Study Variables and each of the Outcomes for French and Spanish interest. As exhibited on the charts, length and intensity of study most significantly relate to student plans to continue with the study of the same foreign language beyond Level III.

TABLE 8

TABULATION OF SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS INTEREST VS. STUDY VARIABLES

FRENCH	Plan to Continue Study of Same Foreign Language	Relevance of Foreign Language to Future Plans	Foreign Language Activities Outside of Class Work	Interest in Acquiring Some Foreign Language Skills	Interest in Career Requiring Foreign Language	Foreign Language Important for Americans	Membership in Foreign Language Clubs
Grade Started Foreign Language Study	+	+	+		+		
Number of Years of Foreign Language Study Before Grade 9	+	+	+				
Number of Hours of Same Foreign Language Before Grade 9	+						
Number of Different Foreign Languages Studied Before Grade 9		+			+		+
Number of Hours of All Foreign Languages Before Grade 9	+						

TABLE 9

TABULATION OF SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS INTEREST VS. STUDY VARIABLES

SPANISH	Plan to Continue Study of Same Foreign Language	Relevance of Foreign Language to Future Plans	Foreign Language Activities Outside of Class Work	Interest in Acquiring Some Foreign Language Skills	Interest in Career Requiring Foreign Language	Foreign Language Important for Americans	Membership in Foreign Language Clubs
Grade Started Foreign Language Study	+		+	+			-
Number of Years of Foreign Language Study Before Grade 9	+			+			
Number of Hours of Same Foreign Language Before Grade 9	+			+			
Number of Different Foreign Languages Studied Before Grade 9	+		+		+		+
Number of Hours of All Foreign Languages Before Grade 9	+		+	+			

Table 8 shows that among students studying French, there exists a positive relationship between length of study and student reports that foreign language is relevant to their future plans, such as job, travel or field of study. In addition, length of study seems to relate to the extent to which they make use of French outside of their classwork to converse, read, write letters, watch films and the like. Furthermore, there is some indication that an early start in French instruction is related to interest in a career that requires knowing a foreign language.

Table 9 shows that the grade in which a student has begun the study of Spanish is negatively related to membership in foreign language clubs. This could be the result of a statistical aberration. On the other hand, since this measure is an indication of behavioral interest, it could be related to unique student attitudes in a school that does not encourage such club participation.

Both analyses show that students who have studied more than one language appear more active in foreign language clubs, more interested in careers involving a foreign language and see more relevance of foreign language to their future plans. All the various relationships of achievement and interest with having studied a number of languages before grade nine could possibly be explained by two hypotheses. First, those who studied no language prior to grade nine could be those passed over in selection for beginning a foreign language earlier. This, if true, means they are less able and thus likely to score more poorly on achievement tests. Second, those who have studied two or even more languages have by that fact alone identified themselves as being interested and talented in the study of languages.

Two final observations emerge from Tables 8 and 9. The student's expressed attitude toward the importance of all Americans studying foreign languages seems not at all to be influenced by length and intensity of French and Spanish instruction. On the other hand, both length and intensity of foreign language instruction are related to student interest in acquiring a set of foreign language skills (talking with native speakers, reading current literature or ordering a meal in the language) only among those in Spanish programs. The latter finding might indicate a greater orientation to practical involvement, rather than to academic usage, among those studying Spanish as opposed to French.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH CLASSROOM PRACTICES

As part of the survey of FLES and non-FLES students, respondents were asked about classroom practices. The classroom practices students described occurred in elementary school (if they had begun foreign language study then), in junior high school, and in high school. Thus, the findings rely on student memory, sometimes over a number of years. Nonetheless, the student responses indicated that certain classroom practices are positively or negatively related to achievement in one or more of the areas of Speaking, Listening, Writing and Reading in both foreign languages. Table 10 lists the classroom practices and the achievement and interest outcomes that were analyzed for relationships, after correcting for the Background Variables previously used and adding also whether the student attended a FLES school system or not.

Tables 11 and 12 show significantly positive (+) or negative (-) relationships between classroom practices and achievement outcomes. Three classroom practices stand out as being highly successful ones, correlating very positively with student achievement

TABLE 10

LISTING OF CLASSROOM PRACTICES ANALYZED FOR RELATIONSHIPS WITH OUTCOMES IN ACHIEVEMENT AND INTERESTS

Classroom Practices

1. Practice Listening
2. Practice Speaking
3. Learning Dialogues
4. Listening to Records, Singing Songs
5. Working from a Textbook
6. Workbook Exercises
7. Watching Movies, Filmstrips, Slides, etc.
8. Reading Stories, Plays, etc.
9. Work on Grammar Exercises
10. Verb Conjugation Drills
11. Memorizing Lists of New Words
12. Using New Words in Speaking and/or Writing Sentences
13. Conversation
14. Translating Sentences into English
15. Translating Sentences into the Foreign Language
16. Use of Tape Recorder and Tapes
17. Use of Language Laboratory or other Equipment Requiring Earphones
18. Learning about the Customs of the People of the Country
19. How often Teacher Speaks in Foreign Language in Class

Achievement Outcomes

1. Listening
2. Speaking
3. Reading
4. Writing

Interest Outcomes

1. Plan to Continue Study of Same Foreign Language
2. Relevance of Foreign Language to Future Plans
3. Foreign Language Activities Outside Class Work
4. Interest in Acquiring Some Foreign Language Skills
5. Interest in Career Requiring Foreign Language
6. Consider it Important for Americans to Learn Foreign Language
7. Membership in Foreign Language Clubs

TABLE 11

TABULATION OF SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS ACHIEVEMENT VS. CLASSROOM PRACTICES

FRENCH	Listening			Speaking			Reading			Writing		
Classroom Practices	El	Jr	HS	El	Jr	HS	El	Jr	HS	El	Jr	HS
Practice Listening						+						
Practice Speaking			+			+				-		
Learning Dialogues	-		-						-			-
Listening to Records, Singing Songs			-	+								-
Textbook Work		+			+						+	
Workbook Exercises												
Watching Movies, Filmstrips, etc.				+	+							
Reading Stories, Plays, etc.			+	+	+				+			+
Grammar Exercises		+		+	+			+			+	+

El = Elementary School
Jr = Junior High School: Grades 7 and 8
HS = High School

TABLE 11 (CONT'D)

TABULATION OF SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS
ACHIEVEMENT VS. CLASSROOM PRACTICES

FRENCH	Listening			Speaking			Reading			Writing		
Classroom Practices	El	Jr	HS	El	Jr	HS	El	Jr	HS	El	Jr	HS
Verb Conjugation Drills						-			-	-		-
Memorizing New Words			-		-	-			-	-		-
Using New Words	+	+	+	+	+	+	+				+	+
Conversation	+	+		+		+	+	+		+	+	
Translate into English		-	-						-	-		-
Translate into Foreign Language					+	+					+	+
Tape Recorder and Tapes	-									-		-
Language Laboratories	-		+			+	-		+	-		+
Learning Customs	+			+								
Teacher Speaks in Foreign Language	+	+	N/A	+		N/A	+	+	N/A	+	+	N/A

N/A = Not Applicable: Students were not asked how often high school teachers spoke in the foreign language.

TABLE 12

TABULATION OF SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS
ACHIEVEMENT VS. CLASSROOM PRACTICES

SPANISH	Listening			Speaking			Reading			Writing		
Classroom Practices	El	Jr	HS	El	Jr	HS	El	Jr	HS	El	Jr	HS
Practice Listening	-		+						+			
Practice Speaking	-				+		-			-		
Learning Dialogues				-								-
Listening to Records, Singing Songs							-			-		
Textbook Work		+								+		
Workbook Exercises			-				+		-			-
Watching Movies, Filmstrips, etc.							-			-		
Reading Stories, Plays, etc.	-									-		
Grammar Exercises		+					+			+	+	

El = Elementary School
Jr = Junior High School: Grades 7 and 8
HS = High School

TABLE 12 (CONT'D)

TABULATION OF SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS
ACHIEVEMENT VS. CLASSROOM PRACTICES

SPANISH	Listening			Speaking			Reading			Writing		
Classroom Practices	El	Jr	HS	El	Jr	HS	El	Jr	HS	El	Jr	HS
Verb Conjugation Drills		+										
Memorizing New Words	-		-				-		-	-		-
Using New Words		+		+	+			+				
Conversation			+			+						
Translate into English							+			+		
Translate into Foreign Language		+						+				
Tape Recorder and Tapes			-			-			-			-
Language Laboratories	+	+					+	+				
Learning Customs	+											
Teacher Speaks in Foreign Language	+		N/A	+	+	N/A		+	N/A	+		N/A

N/A = Not Applicable: Students were not asked how often high school teachers spoke in the foreign language

in both languages. These are: working on grammar exercises, using new words in speaking and writing sentences, and the teacher's conversing with students in the foreign language.

Students studying French who recalled that grammar exercises were used in their junior high classrooms did well on all four skill areas of the test. Students learning Spanish who recalled use of grammar exercises in their elementary or junior high classrooms did better in all areas except speaking. Grammar exercises at the high school level, generally however, showed no positive correlation with test performance.

Using new words in speaking and writing sentences, another classroom practice which aims at helping students learn to produce language for themselves, is also positively correlated with high test performance. This is especially true for speaking, listening, and writing skills among students of French. Moreover, practice <u>using</u> new words appears to be positively related at all grade levels in French classrooms. In Spanish classrooms, on the other hand, using new words in sentences seems most positively related to achievement when done at the junior high level. Used there, it correlates positively with listening, speaking, and reading skills.

The French and Spanish students who recalled that their elementary and/or junior high teacher spoke in the foreign language, did well in <u>all</u> four skill areas <u>plus</u> they displayed an unusual level of interest in foreign languages. There may be several reasons for these unusually consistent and positive results. First, by hearing their teacher speak the language and striving to understand so that they can follow the classroom routine, students learn more readily to recognize and reproduce correct sounds and

syntax. After all, children learn their first language from their parents primarily by listening and imitation, in the context of some meaningful activity. The teacher's routine use of foreign language in the classroom not only helps students realize that the language is indeed alive, but also shows them that they can use it to communicate. It is not just a skill to be learned; it is also the means by which they get along in the class, keeping up with their peers, remaining "in" on all that happens.

Probably for similar reasons, student conversation in the foreign language correlates with high levels of skill, especially among students in French. While for French students, memory of the frequency of conversation in elementary or junior high classes correlates with achievement, for students of Spanish only conversation in high school seems to have had a positive relationship, and then only on listening and reading.

Similar differences in results exist between Spanish and French students when their scores are correlated with such classroom practices as reading stories and plays and watching movies or filmstrips. Both of these practices appear to be more related to achievement in French than in Spanish classrooms. Among students of Spanish, in fact, use of these techniques at the elementary level is negatively correlated with student skill.

Activities involving rote learning or "canned" responses, in general, were negatively correlated with student achievement. Repeating dialogues by rote and memorizing new words were most notable. One obvious possible explanation for such negative correlations is that students find these activities boring and distasteful. Negative correlations with skills were also noted with such practices as verb conjugation drills and using the

tape recorder and tapes to hear various native speakers. Frequent occurrences of acoustical problems with tape recorders resulting in disinterest on the part of students could explain the negative relationship with the use of tapes in the classroom.

While these general findings are interesting, it is instructive to examine more closely those practices which seem most related to achievement for each age group. One must keep in mind, of course, the time span involved, especially in the results concerning elementary classroom activities. In their memory of their elementary years, students no doubt noted those activities which they liked most and least.

Given this reservation, let us look at the correlations among elementary teaching practices and high school skill levels. Elementary school work on grammar exercises, using new words in speaking and/or writing sentences, learning about the customs of the people and the teacher's speaking in the foreign langauge were all positively correlated with high school achievement. We have already discussed the reasons for three of these four. The fourth, learning customs, is no doubt important because it helps elementary children see the relevance of foreign language study by getting them to identify with children in other parts of the world. High school achievement was negatively correlated with learning dialogues, memorizing lists of new words and practice speaking in both languages in the elementary schools. In Spanish, watching movies or film strips at the elementary level produced negative correlations with later reading and writing skill. In French, elementary school use of the tape recorder and tapes and of the language labs correlated negatively with later achievement. Some of the explanation for these negative correlations may lie in the overuse of one technique to the exclusion of others.

At the junior high school level, working from a textbook, working on grammar exercises, using new words in speaking and/or writing sentences, translating into the foreign language and the teacher speaking in the foreign language all are associated positively with achievement. Memorization of lists of new words and translation into English had negative correlations with achievement for French students, whereas neither of these classroom practices had negative correlations among Spanish students. One possible explanation for positive relationships with the use of textbooks is that, more than other resources, they seem to provide a kind of discipline to language learning which is accompanied with a visual mode of learning. For students who learn visually, seeing the words could contribute significantly to skill acquisition. Translation into the foreign language is an activity which gives the students the opportunity to express their own ideas in a foreign language. Thus it not only helps students to see a foreign language as a "real" means of communication, but it also motivates them since it allows them some freedom of expression. The fact that there are so few classroom activities at the junior high level which have negative correlations with achievement could possibly be a reflection of the flexibility of the age group. Junior high students are highly curious and generally enthusiastic about new skills. They seem to overlap both the older and younger age groups in interests and adaptability.

At the high school level, practice listening and conversation were the only classroom activities which had positive correlations with achievement for both French and Spanish students. For French students, reading stories and plays, using new words in sentences and translating into French also showed positive correlation with skills. However, negative correlations occurred for learning dialogues, memorizing lists of new words and use of a tape recorder and tapes. Again, the rote learning aspect of repeating

dialogues and memorizing lists of words seems to have a negative effect. Although the use of a tape recorder and tapes gives students the opportunity to hear a speaker (hopefully native) other than the teacher, this experience is often a remote, uniform and impersonal one. Perhaps used in conjunction with such techniques as conversation, the approach would be a more successful one.

Let us turn now to look at how various classroom practices correlate with student interest in foreign languages. Tables 13 and 14 show significantly positive and negative relationships between classroom practices and student interest measures. Students were considered interested in foreign languages if they planned to continue foreign language study, intended to use their foreign language skills in their future plans or careers, participated in foreign language clubs or activities outside of class and/or felt foreign language study was important for Americans.

The overall results show positive correlations of the following activities not only with achievement but with interests: working on grammar exercises, using new words in speaking and writing sentences, conversing, translating sentences into the foreign language and learning about the customs of the people. These activities clearly aid students to develop their abilities to actually communicate in the foreign language and perhaps help them to see the relevance of learning a foreign language. One should also note that none involve rote learning. Rather, all involve active student participation. In addition to these student activities, the teacher's practice of speaking the foreign language in the classroom also shows positive correlation with student interest in the language, as well as with student achievement. Again, this practice requires student effort, in order to follow classroom routine, and it also helps students view

TABLE 13

TABULATION OF SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS INTEREST VS. CLASSROOM PRACTICES

FRENCH Classroom Practices	Plan Study Same Foreign Language			Foreign Language Relevant To Future Plans			Foreign Language Activities Outside Classwork			Interest In Acquiring Skills			Interest In Career Requiring Foreign Language			Foreign Language Important For Americans			Membership In Foreign Language Clubs		
	El	Jr	HS	El	Jr	HS	El	Jr	HS	El	Jr	HS	El	Jr	HS	El	Jr	HS	El	Jr	HS
Practice Listening						+			+						+	-			-		+
Practice Speaking				-			-	+							+						
Learning Dialogues	-							+		-											
Listening to Records, Singing Songs								+		+											
Textbook Work				-									-								
Workbook Exercises																+			+		+
Watching Movies, Film-strips, etc.		+			+	+		+	+						+		+				

El = Elementary School
Jr = Junior High School: Grades 7 and 8
HS = High School

TABLE 13 (CONT'D)

TABULATION OF SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS INTEREST VS. CLASSROOM PRACTICES

FRENCH Classroom Practices	Plan Study Same Foreign Language			Foreign Language Relevant To Future Plans			Foreign Language Activities Outside Classwork			Interest In Acquiring Skills			Interest In Career Requiring Foreign Language			Foreign Language Important For Americans			Membership In Foreign Language Clubs		
	El	Jr	HS	El	Jr	HS	El	Jr	HS	El	Jr	HS	El	Jr	HS	El	Jr	HS	El	Jr	HS
Reading Stories, Plays, etc.			+			+			+			+							-		
Grammar Exercises		+												+		+					
Verb Conjugation Drills													-	+							
Memorizing New Words								+			+										
Using New Words		+				+			+			+		+	+	+					
Conversation						+									+						
Translate into English	-			-					-				-						-		
Translate into Foreign Language													-						-		+

TABLE 13 (CONT'D)

TABULATION OF SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS
INTEREST VS. CLASSROOM PRACTICES

FRENCH

Classroom Practices	Plan Study Same Foreign Language			Foreign Language Relevant To Future Plans			Foreign Language Activities Outside Classwork			Interest In Acquiring Skills			Interest In Career Requiring Foreign Language			Foreign Language Important For Americans			Membership In Foreign Language Clubs		
	El	Jr	HS	El	Jr	HS	El	Jr	HS	El	Jr	HS	El	Jr	HS	El	Jr	HS	El	Jr	HS
Tape Recorder and Tapes																			+		
Language Laboratories	-				+			+	+		+										+
Learning Customs	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+		+	+	+	+	+	+	+				
Teacher Speaks In Foreign Language	+		N/A	+		N/A	+	+	N/A	+		N/A	+		N/A	+	+	N/A			N/A

N/A = Not Applicable: Students were not asked how often high school teachers spoke in the foreign language

TABLE 14

TABULATION OF SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS INTEREST VS. CLASSROOM PRACTICES

SPANISH Classroom Practices	Plan Study Same Foreign Language			Foreign Language Relevant To Future Plans			Foreign Language Activities Outside Classwork			Interest In Acquiring Skills			Interest In Career Requiring Foreign Language			Foreign Language Important For Americans			Membership In Foreign Language Clubs		
	El	Jr	HS	El	Jr	HS	El	Jr	HS	El	Jr	HS	El	Jr	HS	El	Jr	HS	El	Jr	HS
Practice Listening																-					
Practice Speaking		+																			
Learning Dialogues										+									+		
Listening to Records, Singing Songs										+			+								
Textbook Work	-												-								
Workbook Exercises						-	+								-						
Watching Movies, Film-strips, etc.	+					+	+			+			+		+			+			+

El = Elementary School
Jr = Junior High School: Grades 7 and 8
HS = High School

TABLE 14 (CONT'D)

TABULATION OF SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS INTEREST VS. CLASSROOM PRACTICES

SPANISH	Plan Study Same Foreign Language			Foreign Language Relevant To Future Plans			Foreign Language Activities Outside Classwork			Interest In Acquiring Skills			Interest In Career Requiring Foreign Language			Foreign Language Important For Americans			Membership In Foreign Language Clubs		
Classroom Practices	El	Jr	HS	El	Jr	HS	El	Jr	HS	El	Jr	HS	El	Jr	HS	El	Jr	HS	El	Jr	HS
Reading Stories, Plays, etc.	+			-											+						
Grammar Exercises	-					-	+					+	-						+		
Verb Conjugation Drills	-	+					+						-								
Memorizing New Words																					
Using New Words	-	+					+					+			+						
Conversation								+				+	-						+		
Translate into English																					
Translate into Foreign Language	-			+			+			+											

TABLE 14 (CONT'D)

TABULATION OF SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS INTEREST VS. CLASSROOM PRACTICES

SPANISH Classroom Practices	Plan Study Same Foreign Language			Foreign Language Relevant To Future Plans			Foreign Language Activities Outside Classwork			Interest In Acquiring Skills			Interest In Career Requiring Foreign Language			Foreign Language Important For Americans			Membership In Foreign Language Clubs		
	El	Jr	HS	El	Jr	HS	El	Jr	HS	El	Jr	HS	El	Jr	HS	El	Jr	HS	El	Jr	HS
Tape Recorder and Tapes			-													-					
Language Laboratories								+						+						+	
Learning Customs			+				+			+		+	+								+
Teacher Speaks In Foreign Language	+		N/A	+		N/A	+		N/A	+		N/A			N/A		+	N/A			N/A

N/A = Not Applicable: Students were not asked how often high school teachers spoke in the foreign language

the foreign language as a "real" communication tool rather than as a "dead" textbook body of knowledge. In contrast, the use of a tape recorder and tapes shows a negative correlation with both achievement and interest. Two activities, learning dialogues and listening to records and singing songs, were negative in their correlation with achievement, but positive in their correlation with interests.

Watching movies and filmstrips similarly correlated positively with student interest in foreign languages, but negatively with Spanish foreign language achievement. Thus, teachers using dialogues, records, songs and movies should be aware that they are using these tools to interest students, not to bolster skills. A balanced use can be justified, but overuse could not.

Conversely, teachers overusing textbooks to the exclusion of the above interest-producing activities, should be aware that while textbook use correlates positively with achievement, it correlates negatively with student interest. Again, the teacher must be aware of the danger of inhibiting student interest while fostering skills.

In conclusion, the results of this part of the survey provide an excellent guideline for teachers regarding classroom practices which positively and negatively correlate with student skills and interests. Rote activities are related only negatively to skills and interests, whereas activities requiring active student use of the language show a positive relation to both.

IV. COMPARISON BETWEEN FLES AND NON-FLES PROGRAMS

STUDENT RESPONSES

In analyzing student responses to the surveys, an attempt was made to differentiate between the perceptions of those in FLES programs from those not in FLES programs. FLES students were asked about activities they remembered from elementary school, grades seven and eight, and their present high school classes. Non-FLES students could answer only about practices in grades seven and above. Tables 15 and 16 summarize for FLES and contrast schools the frequency with which each classroom practice occurred at different grade levels.

While listening and speaking were the two practices generally emphasized in foreign language classes, the stress on these techniques was higher in FLES than in contrast schools. Furthermore, while FLES students of both languages reported much speaking and listening practice in elementary school, there is no indication that contrast schools compensated for this by giving more speaking practice in junior high school. In fact, less speaking practice was done in contrast schools than in FLES schools where students had already had elementary speaking experience.

Textbook use, high in all schools, is particularly emphasized in the study of French, rather than Spanish, at the elementary level. Textbook use in most cases reaches a peak at the junior high level, dropping off in high school.

The use of grammar exercises, a practice which correlates positively with student achievement, is emphasized slightly more in contrast than in FLES schools, and somewhat

TABLE 15

FRENCH STUDENTS RESPONDING THAT AN ACTIVITY WAS USED OFTEN AT DIFFERENT GRADE LEVELS (EXPRESSED IN PERCENTS)

	FLES Schools			Contrast Schools	
	Elementary	Grades 7 and 8	High School	Grades 7 and 8	High School
a. Practice Listening	57	60	48	46	44
b. Practice Speaking	69	71	58	65	58
c. Learning Dialogues	47	59	18	53	28
d. Listening to Records, Singing Songs	25	13	4	10	4
e. Working From a Textbook	39	80	64	87	78
f. Workbook Exercises	29	59	44	58	37
g. Watching Filmstrips, Movies, Slides, etc.	6	10	6	10	7
h. Reading Stories, Plays, etc.	17	31	51	12	30
i. Work on Grammar Exercises	31	68	70	77	71
j. Verb Conjugation Drills	28	71	48	72	45
k. Memorizing Lists of New Words	37	58	41	66	39
l. Using New Words in Speaking and/or Writing Sentences	32	50	48	47	36
m. Conversation	35	45	44	31	39
n. Translating Sentences into English	22	48	42	46	45
o. Translating Sentences into the Foreign Language	18	46	49	49	56

TABLE 15 (CONT'D)

FRENCH STUDENTS RESPONDING THAT AN ACTIVITY WAS USED OFTEN AT DIFFERENT GRADE LEVELS (EXPRESSED IN PERCENTS)

	FLES Schools			Contrast Schools	
	Elementary	Grades 7 and 8	High School	Grades 7 and 8	High School
p. Use of Tape Recorder and Tapes	9	14	12	23	25
q. Use of Language Laboratory or Other Equipment Requiring Earphones	3	8	16	7	23
r. Learning About the Customs of the People of the Country	7	5	10	6	8
s. Teacher Spoke in the Foreign Language 50% or More of Class Period	48	76	N/A	48	N/A

N/A = Not Applicable: Students were not asked how often high school teachers spoke in foreign language.

TABLE 16

SPANISH STUDENTS RESPONDING THAT AN ACTIVITY WAS USED OFTEN AT DIFFERENT GRADE LEVELS (EXPRESSED IN PERCENTS)

		FLES Schools			Contrast Schools	
		Elementary	Grades 7 and 8	High School	Grades 7 and 8	High School
a.	Practice Listening	70	28	58	41	55
b.	Practice Speaking	71	89	73	59	53
c.	Learning Dialogues	23	60	27	40	11
d.	Listening to Records, Singing Songs	34	26	9	15	2
e.	Working From a Textbook	9	83	93	83	71
f.	Workbook Exercises	2	51	44	64	49
g.	Watching Filmstrips, Movies, Slides, etc.	11	26	9	17	13
h.	Reading Stories, Plays, etc.	6	34	49	18	26
i.	Work on Grammar Exercises	9	69	55	80	68
j.	Verb Conjugation Drills	6	70	47	78	37
k.	Memorizing Lists of New Words	32	76	62	68	46
l.	Using New Words in Speaking and/or Writing Sentences	19	59	50	39	34
m.	Conversation	33	50	48	21	51
n.	Translating Sentences into English	7	33	44	51	28
o.	Translating Sentences into the Foreign Language	5	28	41	51	45

TABLE 16 (CONT'D)

SPANISH STUDENTS RESPONDING THAT AN ACTIVITY WAS USED OFTEN AT DIFFERENT GRADE LEVELS
(EXPRESSED IN PERCENTS)

		FLES Schools			Contrast Schools	
		Elementary	Grades 7 and 8	High School	Grades 7 and 8	High School
p.	Use of Tape Recorder and Tapes	16	15	1	24	4
q.	Use of Language Laboratory or Other Equipment Requiring Earphones	0	0	1	5	5
r.	Learning About the Customs of the People of the Country	8	19	21	15	19
s.	Teacher Spoke in the Foreign Language 50% or More of Class Period	61	90	N/A	42	N/A

N/A = Not Applicable: Students were not asked how often high school teachers spoke in foreign language.

more in French classes than in Spanish. Thus, in this respect, contrast schools try to compensate somewhat for the extra grammar learned by FLES students at the elementary level.

Listening to records and songs seems to be mainly an elementary school activity, used hardly at all by high school age. The use of workbooks, like the use of texts, peaks in the junior high years. Elementary workbooks are significantly more in use to teach French than they are to teach Spanish. The big difference between workbook use in the two languages in elementary school may reflect both differences in availability of such materials and a greater academic emphasis among French than among Spanish students, even in the elementary grades.

Movies and filmstrips are used more in Spanish than in French, and most in grades seven and eight for both languages. Film use is unusually high in FLES Spanish classrooms in junior high, perhaps reflecting the fact that FLES students at that level are more able to profit from films because they already have some knowledge of the language.

Naturally reading stories and plays becomes a more frequent activity as the students grow older. FLES students do significantly more reading than non-FLES students at both the junior high and high school levels. This suggests that the earlier the foreign language study, the greater the opportunity to later study literature.

Verb conjugation drills, like texts, workbooks and grammar exercises, are used mostly at the junior high level. Here, there are no significant differences in use between the two languages or between FLES and non-FLES schools.

Conversation as a teaching tool (row m. in Tables 15 and 16) and the routine use of the foreign language by the teacher (row s.) both receive less emphasis at the junior high level in contrast schools than they do in FLES schools, where they are rather important and frequently used activities. But then, in Spanish especially, there is a big jump in the use of conversation in contrast schools at the high school level. Minimal use of conversation in non-FLES junior high schools may simply reflect the lower initial competency of students who have no elementary foreign language background. This is supported by the more frequent use of the language by the junior high teachers in FLES systems.

Translation from the foreign language into English drops off in use at the high school level for Spanish students in non-FLES schools. This may be partially because the non-FLES schools use this teaching technique a great deal at the junior high level, thus minimizing its relevance at the high school level. A significant difference also exists at the elementary level between Spanish and French students' use of this kind of exercise. In French elementary classrooms, translation to English is much more common. Translation <u>from</u> English to the foreign language is also a tool used more in French than in Spanish, at all grade levels.

Tapes and language labs, too, are used more in the study of French than in the study of Spanish, especially at the high school level. Non-FLES schools use language labs and tapes more than FLES schools do, perhaps in an effort to compensate for shorter foreign language study. Tapes, however, may be overused in these (non-FLES) schools, for negative correlations between achievement and their use suggest that they are not a very effective teaching tool.

While French students receive more emphasis on academic skills, Spanish students apparently spend somewhat more time learning about the customs of the people of the country whose language they are studying. One possible reason for this is that there are many Spanish speaking students in our schools (and in our country), so that information about culture becomes a more accessible and perhaps more frequently raised topic. The probability that native students might want to share stories about their background with their classmates is greater in Spanish than in French classes.

DECISIONS TO STUDY FOREIGN LANGUAGE

There are a number of factors which influence a student's decision to take a foreign language such as school regulations, parental influences, peer influences and college admission requirements. Data obtained from the students and from the schools show some general patterns of influence. These again are compared for FLES and non-FLES systems.

School regulations differ markedly between the FLES systems and the contrast systems. In the FLES systems any and all students generally are offered the study of foreign language in elementary school and at the junior high school level. The reports from department chairpersons at several school systems indicate that, among the contrast schools, at grades seven or eight some degree of selection is made concerning who may take a foreign language. The selection criteria include teacher recommendations and prior grades. In some school systems test scores are used either for selection or for grouping purposes.

Factors other than school regulations which might influence students to study foreign languages were solicited by asking students what affected their decision to study

a foreign language. The patterns of responses were quite similar for the students from the two types of school systems. Table 17 shows which factors were selected most often by students as variables influencing their decision to study a language at different grade levels. Naturally, the responses concerning enrollment on the elementary grade level were only from those in FLES school systems.

The fact that a large number of FLES students said that the school required the study of a foreign language shows that school regulations influence decisions at the elementary school level. Parental, as well as peer, influence exists at all levels. As expected, college entrance requirements influence the decision at the high school level. Of interest, however, is the fact that students did express an interest in learning more about other people and their culture as a reason for enrolling in foreign language programs. This reason is different from the others because it represents an internal interest by the student rather than a cause generated through circumstantial or interpersonal influence. A similar factor--I wanted to learn another language--is also internal, but does not reflect the same sophistication of interest.

The reasons given by students for selecting the particular language they are now studying do show different patterns according to which type of school system they are in. Table 18 shows the percent of students who indicated each reason was relevant to their choice of language. Of interest is the difference between students in FLES and contrast schools in terms of the item indicating usefulness of the foreign language to their probable field of study. Sixty-eight percent of the FLES students, as opposed to 24% of the non-FLES students, considered the foreign language to be useful to their probable field of study. It is difficult to conjecture why so many more FLES students

TABLE 17

MAJOR INFLUENCES ON DECISION TO STUDY A FOREIGN LANGUAGE
(PERCENT STATING INFLUENCE IN PARENTHESES)

Elementary School	Grade 7 and 8	High School
1. I wanted to learn another language (79%)	1. I wanted to learn another language (86%)	1. The college I want to attend requires a foreign language (72%)
2. My school required me to take a foreign language (77%)	2. My parents encouraged me to take a foreign language (73%)	2. My parents encouraged me to take a foreign language in high school (61%)
3. Most of my friends were taking a foreign language (73%)	3. Most of my friends were taking a foreign language (66%)	3. Most of my friends were taking a foreign language (59%)
4. My parents encouraged me to take a foreign language (68%)	4. I was interested in learning about the people and their way of life (53%)	4. I wanted to learn about other people and customs (57%)

TABLE 18

STUDENT REASONS FOR STUDYING CURRENT LANGUAGE
(EXPRESSED IN PERCENTS)

	FLES Schools	Contrast Schools
a. I thought that this language would be easier than the others I could have taken	25	16
b. This language will probably be useful in getting a good job some day	49	37
c. This language will be useful in my probable field of study	68	24
d. I want to visit the country where this language is spoken	68	68
e. This language is (or was at one time) spoken by my relatives or persons who are (were) close to me	17	38
f. I want to understand better the people who speak this language and their way of life	47	44

selected that reason than did the contrast students, since other responses showed no comparable difference. Longer exposure may simply make students more aware of the possible applicability of foreign languages to medicine, politics, history, law, etc., and therefore more cognizant that whatever they plan to study, foreign languages might be useful to them. Longer exposure may also influence students to go into careers directly utilizing foreign languages.

As might be expected, a change in the language studied is more prevalent among the FLES students simply because they have had more occasions to make such a change. The numbers were relatively small, but the primary reasons for changing were a desire to know a second foreign language and to learn a language more useful to future plans.

In addition to questions asking students their reasons for studying foreign languages, all students were asked how important they thought it was to begin foreign language study in elementary school. Table 19 shows their responses. These are broken down by the particular language they are studying and by the type of school they are attending. Spanish students feel that FLES is more important than do the French students. Those who are in FLES school systems, as might be expected, are more positive about the importance of FLES.

TABLE 19

PERCENT OF STUDENTS RESPONDING HOW IMPORTANT IT IS FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDY TO BEGIN IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

	Spanish		French	
	FLES	Contrast	FLES	Contrast
Very Important	60	40	38	26
Somewhat Important	29	33	43	45
Not at All Important	7	22	18	26

TEACHER RESPONSES

As previously indicated, a questionnaire was administered to foreign language teachers that asked them which practices are most emphasized in their classrooms and which organizational and in-service characteristics of their schools influence the nature of their programs. As with the student surveys, the responses were compared for FLES and non-FLES school instructors.

Many responses to the questionnaire given to teachers of foreign languages indicated that there are no significant differences in teaching emphases between FLES and non-FLES schools. A few differences did appear, however, and these are analyzed below.

As can be seen from Table 20, in both kinds of schools, speaking and listening skills receive the greatest emphasis from teachers, while reading and writing skills receive less. FLES teachers report more emphasis upon listening and speaking than do other teachers. Non-FLES teachers noted more emphasis on reading than FLES teachers did (though FLES students noted more).

Table 21 shows the congruence between teacher and student reports on the use of language laboratories. Students and teachers agree that language labs are used somewhat more in non-FLES schools. More than half of the non-FLES teachers said that their students used the lab for listening once a week or more.

Both teachers and students were asked how much benefit they felt was derived from foreign language instruction before grade seven. Tables 22 and 23 show teacher and student responses to similar questions. Teachers of French classes expressed the opinion

TABLE 20

EMPHASIS PLACED UPON FOREIGN LANGUAGE SKILLS BY SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN FLES AND CONTRAST SCHOOL SYSTEMS (EXPRESSED IN PERCENT OF CLASSES AT LEVELS I, II, AND III)

	Much Emphasis		Some Emphasis		Very Little Emphasis	
	FLES	Contrast	FLES	Contrast	FLES	Contrast
Listening	80	67	20	23	0	10
Speaking	79	64	20	31	1	4
Reading	37	44	49	52	14	4
Writing	40	52	53	44	7	4

TABLE 21

COMPARISION OF USAGE OF LANGUAGE LABORATORIES IN FLES AND CONTRAST SCHOOLS AS REPORTED BY TEACHERS AND STUDNETS (EXPRESSED IN PERCENTS)

	FLES Schools	Contrast Schools
Teachers		
Language Laboratories Used Once a Week or More for Listening	36	60
Language Laboratories Used Once a Week or More for Recording (Speaking)	16	25
Students		
Use of Language Laboratories or Other Equipment Requiring Earphones Often	11	17

TABLE 22

OPINIONS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS OF HOW MUCH STUDENTS BENEFIT IN DIFFERENT SKILLS FROM FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDY PRIOR TO GRADE SEVEN
(EXPRESSED IN PERCENTS RESPONDING "VERY MUCH"

	French	Spanish
Listening Skills	38	56
Speaking Skills	33	50
Reading Skills	11	0
Writing Skills	4	0
Culture	28	33

TABLE 23

PERCENT OF STUDENTS RESPONDING THAT THEY HAD LEARNED "A LOT" ABOUT SKILLS FROM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSES

	French	Spanish
Listening to/Understanding the Language	26	29
Speaking the Language	24	31
Reading the Language	22	11
Writing the Language	13	6
Learning about the Country and the People	6	14

that students have better speaking and listening skills. French students also suggested that "a lot" of speaking, listening and reading skills were learned in elementary classes. The data support their feelings, especially in the area of reading. While writing skills, more than listening skills, show benefit from early French instruction, neither students nor teachers particularly recognized this fact.

Both teachers and students of Spanish expressed the opinion that students with elementary foreign language backgrounds have better speaking and listening skill, but the student test data support only the former pattern. Neither Spanish teachers nor students of Spanish felt early study improved reading or writing skills much. The student test relationships are consistent with such opinions.

In addition to these findings, certain patterns relevant only to teachers emerged from their responses to the surveys. For instance, the answers from the instructors in both FLES and non-FLES systems indicated that there were no major differences in activities provided to stimulate articulation among different levels of the foreign language program in the two types of school systems. Table 24 shows little difference on other such issues between FLES and non-FLES systems. The only notable exceptions are that non-FLES teachers found their curriculum study guides to be more helpful than did the FLES teachers and report that there is more dissemination about activities in other types of classes. On the other hand, FLES teachers report that visits to classes in feeder schools are more customary in their systems.

TABLE 24

TEACHERS' RESPONSES TO VARIOUS ORGANIZATIONAL AND PROCEDURAL PRACTICES IN THEIR SCHOOLS (EXPRESSED IN PERCENTS SAYING "YES")

	FLES Schools	Contrast Schools
1. Is a foreign language curriculum guide available for use by teachers?	83	86
2. If yes, does the guide specify instructional objectives by		
a. language?	88	93
b. course level?	96	93
c. grade level?	56	63
3. If yes, has the guide been		
a. very helpful	16	52
b. somewhat helpful	72	38
c. not at all helpful	12	10
4. Are the following activities provided?		
a. departmental meetings within your school	100	94
b. departmental meetings across all schools offering foreign language	80	75
c. curriculum development meetings	75	67
d. dissemination of professional literature	70	82
e. dissemination about activities in classes other than yours	57	82
5. Does your system provide opportunities to visit other foreign language classes?	77	71

TABLE 24 (CONT'D)

TEACHERS' RESPONSES TO VARIOUS ORGANIZATIONAL AND PROCEDURAL PRACTICES IN THEIR SCHOOLS (EXPRESSED IN PERCENTS SAYING "YES")

	FLES Schools	Contrast Schools
6. If yes, are visits made to		
a. classes at different grade levels?	170	60
b. classes at feeder schools?	65	32
c. classes at schools outside of your school system?	78	88
7. Do you visit foreign language classes on your own initiative?	26	25

V. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study of various relationships between student performance and interest in foreign language and other measures was designed to emphasize, among those other measures, length and intensity of study of foreign language. Thus, even though the sample of students selected was designed to provide variation in length and intensity and not necessarily to be representative of all Massachusetts students, it is of interest to compare academic performance with national norms. National norms are not available for students midway through Level III for form LA of the MLA Cooperative Foreign Language Tests. However, use of the norms for those who have completed Level II shows that Massachusetts students in this special sample were above norms generally in both languages. These students were considerably above norms in speaking scores in both French and Spanish.

The analysis of relationships between length and intensity of study and student performance and interest in foreign languages shows certain positive relationships. While the fact that these positive relationships exist does not mean that length and intensity cause better performance and interest, they do refute the counter argument that length and intensity do not make a difference. Common sense does suggest, however, that there are benefits associated with early study of a foreign language. The teachers report that they observe better skills among students who had an early start on language study.

The analysis of relationships between classroom practices and student performance and interest provide suggestions concerning successful classroom approaches. For instance, the more a teacher converses in the native language in the class, the higher

are the performance and interest among students. This would indicate that such practice should be encouraged.

Classroom activities that require active participation of the students are more positively related to performance and interest than are the more passive activities, as, listening to tapes or watching movies. Those activities that are rote in nature, however actively they involve the student, tend to suggest an unsuccessful influence on student performance and interest, probably because of student disinterest and discontent.

Finally, certain practices showed positive relationships with achievement but negative relationships with student interests. If these relationships represent realistic patterns, teachers of foreign language should weigh carefully the balance established between various activities in order to maintain achievement and still retain interest on the part of students.

The findings indicate one additional point. The responses to the foreign language study suggest that students are acquiring valuable skills through such programs. Given the overall decline in foreign language interest, the possible transference of competencies learned in foreign language courses to other areas should be reconsidered as an important asset of these programs.

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Kevin McAuliffe
Lucy Medaglia
Sally Nelson
John P. Nionakis
Linda Rosenberg
Diana Schwartzman
Elaine Slatkavich
Rose Traniello

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Vlahos, George
Westcott, Harry
Yardumian, Virginia

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Trask, Corridon F.
Tremont, Joseph
Vlahos, George
Westcott, Harry
Yardumian, Virginia